W07 / Bringing policy actors back in. Relevance and prospects of actor-centered approaches in policy studies

Topic : Policy Process , Policy & Politics, Policymaking, Policy implentation

Chair : Jose Luis Mendez (El Colegio de México)

Second Chair : Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

CALL FOR PAPERS

The comparison of dominant theories of the policy process (Sabatier/Weible 2017) shows that they mainly focus on the systemic level of analysis. Even if they take into account individual actors (for instance policy entrepreneurs in the multiple stream framework or policy brokers in the advocacy coalition approach) or collective agents (for instance interest groups and administrations in the punctuated equilibrium theory), they don't directly address two main issues this workshop would aim to tackle. The first one is the role of policy actors in the policy processes as compared to other factors, for instance institutions or junctures. In this regard, the workshop would address some questions rather neglected in the policy field, such as: What is the role of actors in the various theories of the policy process? What is the specific relevance of policy actors in policy-making? What are we referring to when focusing on actors, i.e. ideas, interests, strategies, resources or capacities? To what extent does their role depend on specific contexts? What should be considered as an actor: individuals, networks, groups? What is their relationship with stability and change? The second issue is the methodology for the analysis of policy actors, as the methodologies proposed by the main theories of the policy process do not aim directly at the analysis of agents: for instance the coding of hearings (advocacy coalition framework), of discourses (policy narrative approach) or of the content of policy agendas (punctuated equilibrium framework). A key question in this regard is therefore: What methodologies help to identify, characterize and understand the role of actors in the policy process?

The workshop will be organized around three topics:

1. Actors in approaches of the policy process. In this session we are interested in papers discussing the role assigned to actors in dominant theories of the policy process: neo-institutionalism, advocacy coalition framework, policy narratives, multiple stream framework, constructivism, punctuated equilibrium framework, etc., and/or proposing new frameworks based on policy actors.
2. Characteristics and role of actors in the policy process. For this more empirical session we are looking for contributions comparing different policy fields and taking into account the multi-level dimensions of the policy process and focused on the empirical study of the role of specific kind of actors in the policy actors: individual actors (policy brokers, policy entrepreneurs, political leaders, etc.) and/or collective actors (organized and institutionalized or more loosely structured around shared ideas, discourses and/or informal interpersonal links) in relation to the following questions: Are these actors involved in the whole policy process or only part of it? How is it possible to explain the role of these actors in the policy process? Are these actors favoring or limiting policy change? How far can policy actors be considered as an explaining factor of the policy process (or part of it)?
3. Methods for the analysis of policy actors. For this session we are interested in papers presenting and discussing the methods allowing to characterize and assess of the role of specific actors in the policy process.

ABSTRACT

The comparison of dominant theories of the policy process (Sabatier/Weible 2015) shows that they mainly focus on the systemic level of analysis. Even if they take into account individual actors (for instance policy entrepreneurs in the multiple stream framework or policy brokers in the advocacy coalition approach) or collective agents (for instance interest groups and administrations in the punctuated equilibrium theory), they don't directly address two main issues this workshop will aim to tackle. The first one is the role of policy actors in the policy processes as compared to other factors, for instance institutions or junctures. In this regard, the workshop would address some questions rather neglected in the policy field, such as: What is the relevance of actors in the policy process? What are we referring to when focusing on agents, i.e. ideas, interests, strategies, resources or capacities? To what extent does their role depend on specific contexts? What should be considered as an actor: individuals, networks, groups? What is their relationship with stability and change? The second issue is the methodology for the analysis of policy actors, as the

methodologies proposed by the main theories of the policy process do not aim directly at the analysis of agents: for instance the coding of hearings (advocacy coalition framework), of discourses (policy narrative approach) or of the content of policy agendas (punctuated equilibrium framework). A key question in this regard is therefore: What methodologies help to identify, characterize and understand the role of actors in the policy process? According to the previous discussion, the workshop will be organized around three topics, corresponding to the three workshop´s sessions: 1) The role of actors in approaches of the policy process. 2) Characteristics and role of agents in the policy process. And 3) Methods for the analysis of policy actors.

W07 / Bringing policy actors back in. Relevance and prospects of actor-centered approaches in policy studies

Chair : Jose Luis Mendez (El Colegio de México)

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Session 1Introduction: Actors in Policy Theories

Tuesday, June 26th 10:15 to 12:15 (Posvar Hall - 3301)

Discussants

Nils Bandelow (Technische Universität Carolo-Wilhelmina Braunschweig)

The Relevance of Actor-Centred Approaches to Effective Policy Formulation and Implementation

Chikowore Andrew Itai (ActionAid)

The study seeks to highlight the importance and efficiency of actor-centred approaches in policy formulation. Attention will focus on actors and their roles in policy formulation processes such as the public, media, legislators, political parties, judiciary, government executive and civil society. Actors will be categorised into formal and informal entities where the executive, legislators, judiciary and civil servants are the formal players and the civil society (interest groups, political parties and pressure groups), individual citizens, media, think tanks and research institutions make up the informal actors. While the formal actors are tasked with the overall policy formulation process, the informal actors are important in expressing policy demnads, proposing policy alternatives, providing research, mobilizing citizens through political activisms to advance rational policy formulation. This justifies the intention of this paper which is meant to advance and respond to questions about the importance of the actor-centrerd approachs in policy studies, the effectiveness, role and rational of different actors and how solutions can be sought by engaging different actors in policy studies.

Based on the above, it is premised that effective policies, including implementation is possible through effective engagement of all actors. The policy cycle approach through its six stages in collaboration with other policy models will be used to understand the role and rational of having various actors involved in policy formulation in each of the stages. This will make it possible to analyse whether these actors advance or limit policy processes either by genuinely advocating for development or selfishly advancing their own interests. The other frameworks and models that will be used together with the policy cycle approach include: the multiple stream, advocacy coalition, policy narrative frameworks, and the punctuated equilibrum, rational, incremental and institutional models.

Kingdon’s “Multiple Streams Framework” focuses on stages of problem identification (alteration specification) and agenda setting. The Advocacy Coalition framework will reveal the significance of actors in developing effective policies by translating group beliefs of engagement in policy making. The Policy Narrative Framework will be employed for its importance in determining public opinion and influencing governmental action. The Punctuated Equilibrium model will be essential in monitoring and evaluating the magnitude of policy change emanating from the policies implemented and depicting and measuring policy making stability and impact. The incremental model will validate the importance of improving ineffective policies, while the rational and group theories will ascertain the process of selecting the best policy options for adoption and the influence of groups in policy formation. The impact of including or abandoning some actors in the different stages and or models and frameworks will be critically assessed in an effort to come up with solutions for successful policy development without governement monopoly.

To gather evidence to substantiate the actor-centred approach in policy formulation, a purposive sample of approximately 50 respondents from the public, civil society (political parties, pressure groups, NGOs, lobby and interest groups), government, media and think tanks in Tanzania will be interviewed. The systems analysis approach will be used as a methodology to analyse information by breaking policy making process into component pieces to enable the varied actors to work and interrelate harmoniously to develop effective policies. The systems analysis will be intergrated with the mixed research approach where both qualitative

and quantitative reseach methods will be used making it possible to achieve complimentarity through triangulation of each others strengths and weaknesses. Through the mixed research methods ability for inductive and deductive analysis, it will be possible to critically scrutinise the impact of policies which are quantitative and qualitative in nature, making it possible to analyse the policy models and analysing the bottlenecks faced in different political, economic and social policy settings across the globe.

A set of different data collection tools such as interview guides, questionnaires and desk and documentary reviews including observations will be used. Using these methods will enable the management of the negative effects or the weaknesses of each technique selected as some tools maybe elusive, while others may reveal and provide a niche towards understanding policy studies on the part of the researcher.

In conclusion, debates on the importance of the actor-centered approach to policy studies will be advanced through the use of the different policy models, approached and frameworks and the involvement of different different actors. The systems analysis approached and the mixed reseach methis will be used to gather and analyse data to come up with a comperehensive basis in support of the actor centered approach in policy studies.

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Session 2Understanding the role of actors in the policy process

Tuesday, June 26th 13:45 to 17:00 (Posvar Hall - 3301)

Discussants

Jose Luis Mendez (El Colegio de México)

Understanding the Role of Advocacy Coalitions in Canada's Immigration Detention Policy

Vanessa C. Wachuku (Ryerson University)

Public policy design surrounding migrants with irregular status legitimizes the adoption of immigration detention practices in Canada. This practice imposes undue hardship and is considered harsh and arbitrary by domestic and international actors such as the United Nations. Meanwhile, policy changes that reinforce the immigration detention of foreign nationals are implemented without an investigation that traces the role and influence of advocacy coalition groups, primarily comprised of closed border supporters and open border advocates, on these policy changes. This paper aims to fill this knowledge gap and contribute to scholarship on immigration detention policy in Canada by exploring the role of advocacy coalition groups in the policy change process in Canada. Accordingly, this workshop paper traces the role of closed border supporters and open border advocates in policy changes relating to the immigration detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants in Canada.

Technology-related actors and policy design choices: the case of the Swiss renewable energy feed-in tariff

Leonore Haelg (ETH Zurich)

Tobias Schmidt (ETH Zurich)

Sebastian Sewerin (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich)

Policies to induce deployment of low-carbon technologies and hence mitigate climate change have seen large global diffusion. While the specific transfer mechanisms have been extensively covered in the literature, how and why policy instruments and their specific design are accommodated in the receiving country remains underexplored. Against this background and in line with the argument that policy design rather than the instrument type is more decisive for technology deployment, we seek to shed light on the role of technology-related actors, i.e. technology suppliers and technology users, in the implementation and design phase of deployment policy instruments. Based on the concept of instrument constituencies which we expand to the more general design constituencies, we analyse around which arguments such constituencies form and disaggregate at the different abstraction levels of Cashore and Howlett's (2007) and Howlett and Cashore's (2009) taxonomy of policy elements. The aim is to establish these actors' role specific policy design choices. Empirically, we focus on the implementation of the renewable energy feed-in tariff in Switzerland. This case is particularly interesting for two reasons: First, while a blueprint of the policy was directly transferred to Switzerland from Germany, the Swiss policy shows significant adaptations for specific design elements where the actor bases differ between the two countries. Second, the design of the feed-in tariff is different for different technologies hence providing the opportunity for a comparative analysis. The empirical material includes policy documents and parliamentary debates as well as interviews with policymakers and technology-related actors who were involved in the policymaking process. The preliminary results suggest the existence and exertion of influence of dynamic design constituencies on all levels of the

policy process.

Our study contributes to the question of the characteristics and role of actors in the policy process not only by introducing the often overlooked technology-related actor groups but also by analysing their role in policy design choices at the different levels of the policymaking process.

The Political Rigging Framework: A Research Agenda for Analyzing Who Influences Policy Decisions in the 21st Century, and How

Janine Wedel (George Mason University)

Dana Dolan (George Mason University, Schar School of Policy and Government)

Hussain Nazia (Center for Policy Research, United Nations University)

The Political Rigging Framework: A Research Agenda for Analyzing Who Influences Policy Decisions in the 21st Century, and How

Democracy is under siege around the world. Many analysts point to the 2016 election of Donald Trump – a businessman, television celebrity, and political outsider who continues to display open contempt for constitutional rights and the norms of political behavior – as marking a new era of democratic fragility. We contend it has not. Instead, the rise of Trump, and indeed a growing number of elected “populists” in nations around the world, are symptoms of a democratic governance reconfiguration underpinned by the interactions of several long-term processes over the past several decades: financialization; privatization and deregulation; the end of the Cold War, dispersing global authority and opening up sparsely governed arenas; and digitization and new information technologies. These four transformational developments have created opportunities for novel forms of influencing, with dramatic implications for democratic accountability. The developments call into question traditional assumptions about policymaking. If we are to understand the impact of these shifts on contemporary policymaking, our seminal public policy theories require a frank reappraisal. Ironically, this call comes at a time when scholars are extending several theoretical frameworks, many developed in U.S. contexts, and some dating back to the early 1980s, to explain policymaking in international contexts.

Our project focuses beyond Lasswell's definition of politics as “who gets what, when, and how,” to ask not only *who decides*, but more tellingly: *who influences* those who decide, and *how*? These questions direct attention to a new set of policy actors - *influence elites* - who bypass democratic accountability to engage in what we call “political rigging,” a set of novel influencing practices. The outcome is a self-reinforcing cycle that enables actors to avoid accountability. Influence elites draw their power from occupying multiple official and private roles and blurring the boundaries among political, economic, media, cultural, and social arenas. Importantly, scholars trying to make sense of contemporary policymaking by using traditional theories of the policy process can easily overlook these new actors, who fail to fit neatly into existing conceptual categories of policy actors such as congresspersons, lobbyists, or interest groups.

To address this critical blind spot, we introduce several concepts as a first stage in developing our Political Rigging Framework (PRF). Specifically, we draw on theoretical insights and empirical examples to show how influence elites manipulate the system through an evolving set of practices that incorporate the principles of informality, flexibility, and digital-powered simulacra. *Informality* refers to practices that actors employ as they navigate shifting (and normatively constructed) formal arenas. *Flexibility* empowers individual actors, groups, organizations, and social networks to maneuver among official and private spheres and among political, economic, and legal arenas in unaccountable ways. Finally, *digital-powered simulacra* leverage the “civic” space of the Internet, as well changing traditional media, to invisibly mold public opinion toward undetectable ends.

Scholars may employ these three concepts to extend and update traditional policy process frameworks; however, we suggest that a fundamentally new framework is required to uncover the structures and practices of political rigging that influence elites help create, of which they are a part, and from which they benefit. This new framework must look beyond formal institutions and organizations to recognize the less visible—but ever-present—role of informality in shaping living governing systems. It must move beyond static frameworks that limit understanding of dynamic processes and the roles of flexible, mobile players in shaping the system. It must recognize that systems can be rigged in different ways and combinations, rather than existing as either “captured” or otherwise. Finally, the new framework must begin with individual influencers as the point of entry to examining complex, dynamic systems. We propose a new research agenda aimed at developing the Political Rigging Framework, guided by these three concepts.

Further, we invite fellow workshop participants to explore how these concepts might challenge the underlying assumptions of dominant theories of the policy process. For example, do the practices of informality and flexibility enable new ways of influencing the problem, policy, and political streams in the

Multiple Streams Framework? Do digital-powered simulacra undermine the validity of using national newspaper reports to study attention swings in the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory? Can digital-powered simulacra enabled by Twitter and other forms of social media be taken at face value to inform Narrative Policy Analysis studies?

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Session 3Methodological issues

Wednesday, June 27th 09:00 to 12:15 (Posvar Hall - 3301)

Discussants

David Aubin (Université Catholique de Louvain)

Whom can you trust? Comparing policy positions from surveys or content analysis

Marlene Kammerer (Institute for Political Science)

Karin Ingold (University of Bern)

Frédéric Varone (University of Geneva)

Theories of the policy process in general and of interest group lobbying in particular are concerned in how corporate actors translate their ideologies, values, and preferences into concrete policy decisions. To identify these policy preferences, empirical studies apply two main techniques: content analysis of official documents and surveys of policy stakeholders. This information about actors' positions is then used to explain the policy process or outputs, coordination or collaboration, and policy success or failure. Policy preferences gathered through content analysis or survey data are given considerable explanatory power in many empirical studies. In consequence, identifying and explaining a potential mismatch between officially and survey-stated preferences is highly relevant for policy studies. However, not much is understood about the differences between positions stated in official documents as contrasted to elite surveys on the same policy issue. This article analyses whether we observe such alterations between data on policy preferences produced by content analysis or surveys and asks how these divergences can be explained. Specifically, it investigates why some political actors diverge in their policy preferences and what kind of policy instruments or subsystem types are more prone for divergent preference statements. This article relies empirically on three different policy subsystems in Switzerland: climate, energy, and water protection. In all three policy fields, public and private actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGO), trade unions, business and citizen groups, scientific experts, political parties, and public agencies, were invited by the Swiss federal government to public consultation procedures to officially pronounce their policy preferences on specific aspects in the respective policy processes. These rich official documents constitute the basis for coding policy positions by content analysis. Once the policy-making process was over, the same policy actors were surveyed and asked about the policy positions they had supported during the decision-making process. By comparing both sources of information on policy preferences, we are able to identify which actors deviate in their policy positions between official statements and survey answers. This (potential) reporting gap constitutes the main dependent variable in this analysis. A multi-level regression analysis is applied to assess the impact of both individual actor- and subsystem-based variables on this reporting gap. The preliminary results show that actors more strongly deviate in their policy positions between surveys and official statements in relation to contested policy instruments, and when the level of conflict in the subsystem is high.

Analyzing Programmatic actors: methodological challenges for the understanding of policy change

Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

William Genieys (Sciencespo Paris- CEE - CNRS)

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss the methodological and theoretical challenges of the

analysis of policy elites promoting change in a policy field. Based on different empirical researches focused on policy change in healthcare (in Europe and in the USA), it presents the contributions of a method combining the study of the sociological background, the careers, the ideas, the involvement in the decision process and the relations between actors holding key position in the policy process. It sheds the light on the specific of role programmatic actors, corresponding to narrow groups defining, promoting and producing policy change over a middle or long term period. The contribution of this kind of actors to policy change is strongly related to the power interactions with other policy elites and interest groups, depending of the distribution of relevant resources for public policy and their evolution over time in different contexts.

Media Representations of American Health Reforms: The Role of Policy Actors in Transmitting Policy Narratives in the Massachusetts and Utah Cases (2002-2011)

Brent Epperson (University of Alberta)

A generation after the failure of the Clinton Administration's 1994 Health Security Act, between 2002 and 2012, a number of state-level health reform efforts preceded and paralleled the federal Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) debates. Collectively, the state and federal reforms of the period revealed greater political openness to health care policy change. Building from literature in narrative policy analysis and media framing and effects theory, this paper examines newspaper media coverage of two state-level health reform efforts—the Massachusetts Health Reform Law (Romneycare) (2002-2006) and the Utah Health System Reform (2004-2011). My research critically examines the role of policy actors in the movement of neoliberal language framing metaphors and narratives of health within the state-based and national newspaper media. This paper demonstrates coalescence of policy actors' discourses in media representations between Republican-leaning and Democratic-leaning newspapers. Specifically, this paper focuses on the role of key policy and media actors—state legislators, governors, political columnists, and leaders of health reform advocacy organizations and coalitions—in (re)diffusing reform narratives.

Psychological Perspectives on Individual Actors in the Policy Process

Johanna Hornung (University of Lausanne)

Nils Bandelow (Technische Universität Carolo-Wilhelmina Braunschweig)

In analyzing the policy process, theories and frameworks base on different models of individual actors. These models implicitly or explicitly refer to psychological research as the essential tradition in understanding individual actors' preferences and behavior. In detail, policy process frameworks make use of different concepts, such as belief systems (Zafonte and Sabatier, 1998) and ambiguity (Zohlnhöfer and Rüb, 2016). Whereas most of the frameworks apply some concept of bounded rationality, the concrete embodiment varies (Heikkila and Cairney, 2017). Psychological foundations are equally relevant to the explanatory factors in the theories of the process as to the currently increasing debate around an optimization of communication between policy studies and policy actors (Cairney and Kwiatkowski, 2017; Cairney and Weible, 2017).

Yet the psychological state of the art developed, and the advances of policy process research lack systematic recognition of this development. The proposed workshop paper aims to fill this gap by, firstly, assessing the most relevant and most applied psychological approaches in policy process research and showing how they are integrated into policy analysis. Secondly, it reviews the state of the art in social psychology, reflecting which psychological approaches may be transferred to which theories of the policy process in what way. In doing so, the contribution equally outlines which policy process frameworks base on the same foundations as this is a central question for cross-fertilization of theories (Bandelow et al., 2017). Concerning the selection of psychological theories for review, this will be an empirical process and might include theories such as the Theory of Reasoned Action/Theory of Planned Behavior, Social Identity Theory, and Belief Systems explaining actor behavior in policy-making processes.

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Session 4The role of policy elites

Wednesday, June 27th 13:45 to 17:00 (Posvar Hall - 3301)

Discussants

Renee Johnson (Rhodes College)

Explaining the role of civil servants in the policy process: Policy advice and learning dynamics

David Aubin (Université Catholique de Louvain)

Lev Lhommeau (Université catholique de Louvain)

Pierre Squevin (University of Oslo)

Civil servants are essential and often neglected actors in the policy process. Their involvement in policymaking is essential to democracy and good public policy. They play a mediating role between interest groups and politicians which both push their agenda without necessarily weighting the different problem frames and policy options. The detachment of their position makes their advice to politicians more informed and based on an accumulation of in-house knowledge and a plurality of external advice than any other stakeholder. Theories like the advocacy coalition framework for example tend to refer to decision makers without specifying the position and role of these public actors (top civil servants, politicians, political advisers or heads of agencies). The involvement of civil servants in the policy process has been studied for long (e.g. Lindblom 1959, Dahl 1961), but it needs a fresh look. In the recent years, civil servants have gained more attention by policy scholars. Their importance in the policy process was reassessed in sector-specific case studies (Montpetit 2011, Paquet 2015). Their policy work was specifically investigated (Colebatch, Howlett), as well as their involvement into political advice (Shaw & Eichbaum 2017, Maley 2015). This communication intends to go beyond description and proposes to further theorize the role of civil servants in the policy process. Relying on a synthesis of the most recent literature, the theoretical framework explains the role of civil servants according to both their position and behavior. Their role is related to the kind of advice they formulate (fact-driven vs. normative, and issue- vs. process-specific) (Nekola and Kohoutec 2016) and its utilization of their policy advice, that is its impact on policy formulation (Landry et al. 2001). The role in the policy process is explained by a combination of institutional position and individual behavior. The position depends on the institutional context (Scharpf 1997), in this case the national political-administrative relation or tradition, the type of network within the policy subsystem (for example pluralist vs. neocorporatist), as well as the position in the government (or public administration). Relying on the policy learning literature, individual behavior refers to the way civil servants commit themselves in the production of advice: What kind of information do they mobilize? Do they stick to prior beliefs or do they update their beliefs, attitudes and opinions (Strickland et al. 2011)? Do politicians trust them and collaborate to develop a shared understanding of the policy problem? In sum, the role of civil servants in the policy process increases when their policy advisory role is recognized in the political-administrative system and they have a mediating function between interest groups and politicians, but this is not enough. Individual civil servants must also be trusted by the politicians, rely on information based on evidence and maintain a learning dynamics. The communication will rely on illustrations from a survey conducted in Belgium and will propose a comparative agenda for empirical testing.

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Policy Elites and Programmatic Actors : The Role of Custodians of State Policies in Health Care Policy change in the United States since the 1970s

William Genieys (Sciencespo Paris- CEE - CNRS)

Lawrence Brown (Columbia University in the city of New York)

Policy elites-- what William Genieys has termed "custodians of state policy"-- have played crucial roles in shaping health care policy in the United States. The backgrounds and agendas of these elites have shifted, however, as the nation's struggles over national health insurance came to accommodate the preoccupation with cost containment and as policymakers sought to forge innovative combinations of public authority and market forces. Drawing on three important episodes-- legislation to promote health maintainance organizations in the early 1970s, the reform proposed by President Bill Clinton in 1993-94, and the creation of the Affordable Care Act in 2010-- this paper explores patterns of continuity and change in the composition and contributions of policy elites in the shaping of US health care policy.

The Programmatic Action Framework (PAF)

Nils Bandelow (Technische Universität Carolo-Wilhelmina Braunschweig)

Marc Smyrl (Université de Montpellier)

Leading theories of the policy process mostly stem from peculiarities of American politics and neglect career trajectories as a central explanation for collective action in policy processes. Originating from French public policy research (Genieys and Smyrl, 2008; Hassenteufel et al., 2010), the Programmatic Action Framework (PAF) brings in a new perspective that proves its potential to reveal valuable insights into policy processes also beyond the French borders. In introducing this framework, this paper aims to do two things. Firstly, it clarifies the original contribution of the latest leading policy process frameworks (Weible and Sabatier, 2017) with regard to their explanatory power. As a response, the main contribution then presents the theoretical outline of the PAF as a new framework for public policy research. Thereby, the paper discusses the PAF as a demarcated framework as well as a potential complementation of existing frameworks by integrating PAF.

The PAF proposes that elites compete for authority within policy sectors through the promotion of rival policy programs, as well as competing with elites from outside their sector for authoritative and regulatory resources. Furthermore, elite formation essentially depends on shared biographies and career interests, instead of stable beliefs or purely rational motives. Success of programmatic elites is contingent upon homogeneity of biographies, a continuing history of linkages, as well as the coherence and strength of the policy program.

Besides outlining these theoretical foundations, the contribution formulates explicit hypotheses on the conditions under which programmatic elites form and dissolve. In addition, the hypotheses address the formation and possible development of programs and the success of programmatic elites in realizing their policy program depending on composition and resources of programmatic elites, program contents,

opponents, and institutional constraints of the political system as well as peculiarities of the policy issue.

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Session 5The role of specific types of actors

Thursday, June 28th 09:00 to 12:15 (Posvar Hall - 3301)

Discussants

Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

Intermediary actors in increasingly interdependent and complex policy processes

Ulrike Zeigermann (Universtity of Würzburg, Department for Political Science and Sociology)

Increasing interdependence of political decisions raises new questions on how to ensure coherence across different national, international and sectoral policies as manifested in SDG 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also raises new theoretic and methodologic questions on how to understand those complex policy processes. Recent literature has addressed the issue of policy trade-offs and coherence in policy analyses and in studies on multi-level governance (cf. Hoebink 2004, Sianes 2013, Siitonen 2015, Carbone and Keijzer 2016). Yet, we know very little about the role of actors in policy processes at the intersection of both different policy levels and fields.

Taking this disjunction as a starting point, the analysis in this paper explores the role and characteristics of actors in the emerging field of sustainability policy which is particularly interesting due to its unique international and interdepartmental orientation. Specifically, the paper focuses on actors dealing with questions of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. It argues that those intermediary actors are crucial for understanding policy processes and the change in modern societies. In order to understand their capabilities, orientations and interactions in relation to the institutional setting and policy environment (cf. Scharpf 1997) this paper offers new findings from case studies in France and Germany. My research design combines a qualitative analysis of 49 semi-structured expert interviews, with results from a participant observation conducted in international meetings on Policy Coherence for Development between October 2013 and March 2015, and thorough analysis of official documents linked to the work of these actors in France and Germany.

The first part of the paper offers a mapping of relevant actors in France and Germany and illustrates that their orientations and capabilities have changed over the years. Both case studies demonstrate that actors from within national bureaucracies that have interacted in an international epistemic community were crucial for the circulation of knowledge and proliferation of policies for Policy Coherence for Development between 2005 and 2015. Contrary to traditional theories focusing on the role of either individual or collective actors in policy processes, my analysis shows that this distinction may not always be helpful for characterizing actors at the intersection of different policy sectors and levels in the field of sustainability.

The second part of the paper analyses those intermediary actors in greater detail and focuses on their interactions. Operationalizing theories of policy transfer, translation and resistance (cf. Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; James and Lodge 2003; Stone 2004, Delpeuch 2009; Saurugger and Terpan 2013; Hassenteufel 2013) it raises the question on how far these interactions can explain policy change. The comparison of interactions of similar actors dealing with questions of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development in France and Germany indicates, that the institutional setting and policy environment both limits and enables their role in policy processes.

Based on empirical analysis of actors in the emerging field of sustainability policy, my paper seeks to contribute to the debate academic debate on characterizing actors in increasingly complex and interdependent policy processes. It offers new thoughts for studying actors at the intersection of both different policy levels and fields combining the framework of actor-centred institutionalism with transfer theories.

Policy Entrepreneurs and Instrument Constituencies in EU Innovation Policy

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Marc Smyrl (Université de Montpellier)

The opacity of policy-making in the institutions of the European Union is well known, but efforts to elucidate it have long been dominated by debates among rival ‘grand theories’ of Europeanization. Whether based on the formal institutions of the EU, interests attributed to member states, or the presumed dynamic of sectoral spillover, they share a common blind spot when it comes to conceptualizing the roles and motivations of the individual and collective actors who actually make policy choices.

We take as starting point Smith’s (2010) challenge to think in terms of a “government of the European Union” made up of all actors contributing to the definition and resolution of European problems, whose perimeter and participants vary across issue areas and whose functioning can best be understood by the systematic application of an actor centered approach to political sociology. We apply this approach to an area that has risen to prominence since the 1990s: open or “user-centered” innovation. Based on a systematic documentary analysis supplemented by interviews with key informants, we highlight the importance of two collective actors inside the “government of the EU” but distinct from more commonly studied types such as ‘Eurocrats” and representatives of member states or interest groups.

The first is the Open Innovation Strategy and Policy Group (OISPG). Building on Kingdon’s (1984) original concept of the necessity of intermediaries linking problems and solutions, we highlight the central role of this unit, housed within the European Commission’ DG CONNECT but consisting of a partnership among technology firms, academic specialists, and territorial authorities, as a policy entrepreneur linking the solution of open innovation with the previously identified problem of Europe’s perceived innovation shortfall. Seizing on one of the possible incarnations of the open innovation model championed by the OISPG, the European Network of Living Labs has become an instrument constituency (Béland and Howlett, 2015) whose institutional identity is now bound up with the Living Lab model, and whose role has gone beyond the facilitation of a European priority to embrace the active promotion of this particular instrument well beyond the EU perimeter, offering its condulting services to a growing list of global clients.

Together, these two collective actors, straddling the frontier of the European Commission but clearly part of a broader “government of the EU,” illustrate how the dynamic of competition among elite actors can be a driver for policy change and, more specifically, a key factor explaining why some instruments rather than others emerge as the preferred solution to perceived problems.

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Strategic Action and Policy Outcomes. The cases of Felipe Calderon and Enrique Peña in Mexico and Fernando Collor and Fernando Cardoso in Brazil

Jose Luis Mendez (El Colegio de México)

This paper aims at empirically supporting the hypothesis that the degree of presidential strategic action affects the level of policy achievement and thus the type of government. Strategic action is studied in two areas of presidential activity: agenda-setting and policy development. In turn, policy achievement/government type is considered based on the degree to which at the end of a given administration a pertinent policy agenda is reached without causing collateral damage. Four cases are compared to empirically support this hypothesis, namely the presidencies of Enrique Peña (2012-2018) and Felipe Calderon (2006-2012) in Mexico and of Fernando Cardoso (1995-1998) and Fernando Collor (1990-1992) in Brazil. The comparison of each of these pair of administrations involves a most similar cases research design (George and Bennett 2005) where, despite involving the same institutional framework and the same party and electoral system, in each pair of cases different levels of strategic action can be associated with different levels of policy/governmental achievement. The study of each administration is based on the use of primary and secondary sources of evidence as well as field interviews. The paper thus aims at stressing strategic action as a key independent variable for the understanding of policy outcomes and governmental types, rather than structural factors such as institutional frameworks or historical junctures (without meaning that they are not important).

The Role of the President in the Development of U.S. Science and Technology Policy

Renee Johnson (Rhodes College)

Erin Dolgoy (Rhodes College)

In this project, we investigate the role of the President in the development of science and technology policy in the U.S. since WWII. We focus on the president because dominant theories of the policy process (i.e. advocacy coalition framework, social construction, punctuated equilibrium) do not have strong conceptualizations of the role of the president in policymaking. Nevertheless, many contemporary presidency scholars contend that presidents can have a significant effect on policymaking because of the powers of the office (Gitterman 2017; Howell 2003; Cooper 2002). In this project, our goal is to weave together the insights from contemporary policy theory with the insights of the presidency literature to conceptualize the role of the president in policymaking.

We focus on science and technology policy for several reasons. Because it is an under-examined area of public policymaking, an examination of this policy domain might result in different understandings of the role of the president in policymaking in comparison to other policy areas. Additionally, science and technology policy generally lacks public salience at the same time it is highly technically complex. This combination of characterisitics suggests that the president may have little to gain from pursuing science and technology policy goals; yet an examination of presidential actions suggests that presidents are quite active in this policy domain.

Our project focuses on an analysis of presidential speeches and executive orders since WWII to develop an understanding of the role of the president in science and technology policymaking. This enables us to determine whether science and technology policy largely mirrors the policy dynamics in which it is embedded or whether there is a policy dynamic specific to science and technology policy. Each of the authors of this project lends specific expertise in theories of science and technology (Dolgoy) and the empirical study of public policy (Johnson). Because of the interdisciplinary background of the co-authors, this project will speak to audiences interested in the policy process, science and technology policy, political theory, and the presidency.

W07 / Bringing policy actors back in. Relevance and prospects of actor-centered approaches in policy studies

Chair : Jose Luis Mendez (El Colegio de México)

Second Chair : Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

Session 6General discussion and next-steps planning

Thursday, June 28th 13:45 to 16:00 (Posvar Hall - 3301)

General discussion and next-steps planning

Jose Luis Mendez (El Colegio de México)

Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

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